

UConn may get \$5.15M for livestock research

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STORRS — If the U.S. Senate passes a \$83.7 billion agriculture spending bill approved Tuesday by the House, the University of Connecticut could receive \$5.15 million toward agricultural research.

Announced Wednesday by U.S. Rep. Rob Simmons, R-2nd, the UConn research program funding is earmarked for two specific areas: advanced animal vaccine research and bovine genetics.

With UConn, the University of Missouri and the United States Department of Agriculture teaming up, \$3.4 million is earmarked to develop new technologies to eliminate diseases of cattle, poultry and swine.

According to UConn spokesman Karen Grava, the research primarily takes place on Plum Island with an emphasis on viral and bacterial infections in the animals.

"It's to protect the food chain," she said.

In the genetics area, UConn, in partnership with the University of Illinois and the USDA, will receive \$1.75 million to continue

research in the biotechnology field and expand studies toward improving the cloning process in elite cows and bulls.

Under the direction of Dr. Xiangzhong "Jerry" Yang, director of UConn's Center for Regenerative Biology, researchers have even successfully cloned a clone cow.

Yang and his team hope to prove that cloning is commercially viable for agriculture.

"We're glad the House recognized the importance of this research to the state and the nation," Grava said.

In addition to university research projects, the bill recommends \$4.5 million in funding for the Coventry Lake sewer project.

Simmons, who is not a member of the agriculture appropriations committee, made the recommendations earlier this spring.

He said historically, the USDA looks favorably on the committee's recommendations.

"I'm pleased the committee recognized the important role eastern Connecticut — particularly the University of Connecticut — plays in the agricultural sector," Simmons said.